



Ethiopia

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - [2002](#)

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
March 31, 2003

Ethiopia continued its transition from a unitary to a federal system of government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. In 2000 the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) won general elections to the federal and regional parliaments. Most opposition political parties competed in the election; however, due to lack of funds and often weak political organization, opposition parties contested only 20 percent of the seats to the federal parliament, where EPRDF and affiliated parties held 518 of 548 seats. EPRDF and affiliated parties also held all regional parliaments by large majorities, although opposition parties had held approximately 25 percent of seats in the Addis Ababa Regional Council until the Prime Minister dissolved the entire council in October. The ruling party continued to control all 13 executive committee seats in the regional council. The regional council remained dissolved at year's end; no dates had been set for new elections. Opposition parties held exactly 10 percent of the seats in the Southern Region at year's end. According to international and local observers, the 2000 national elections generally were free and fair in most areas; however, serious election irregularities occurred in the Southern Region, particularly in Hadiya zone. Federal regions, largely organized along ethnic lines, increasingly were autonomous and had a large degree of local control over fiscal and most political issues. However, the relationship between the central Government and local officials and among various judiciaries lacked consistent coordination, and occasionally actions were taken at the local level that conflicted with stated federal policy. Highly centralized authority, poverty, civil conflict, and unfamiliarity with democratic concepts combined to complicate the implementation of federalism. The Government's ability to protect constitutional rights at the local level was limited and uneven. Political parties predominantly were ethnically based. Local administrative, police, and judicial systems remained weak throughout the country. The judiciary was weak and overburdened but continued to show signs of independence; progress was made in reducing the backlog of cases.

The security forces consisted of the military and the police, both of which were responsible for internal security. The Federal Police Commission and the Federal Prisons Administration were subordinate to the Ministry of Federal Affairs. The military consisted of both air and ground forces and reported to the Ministry of National Defense. Following the end of fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000, some Ethiopian troops were demobilized, and others were redeployed from the border area in Tigray to other regions throughout the country, which increased the internal military presence in some parts of the Somali, Oromiya, and the Southern Regions. Military forces conducted an increased number of low-level operations against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Somalia-based Al'Ittihad Al'Islami terrorist organization (AIAI), and elements of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) both in the country and in southern Somalia and northern Kenya. Some members of the security forces committed human rights abuses.

The economy was based on smallholder agriculture, with more than 85 percent of the estimated population of 63 million living in rural areas under very basic conditions and engaged in subsistence farming. Agriculture accounted for approximately 45 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Industry accounted for approximately 12 percent of economic activity; in urban centers, the majority of economic activity was in the informal sector. Severe drought, massive crop failures, and extensive livestock losses adversely affected 10 to 14 million persons during the year, and caused GDP growth to slow to 5 percent. Trade barriers favored party-owned businesses. Inflation decreased to -3 percent during the year. Military spending decreased during the year. The Government continued to implement an economic reform program designed to stabilize the country's financial position, promote private sector participation in the economy, and attract foreign investment; however, significant impediments to investment remained, and there were approximately 200 government-owned enterprises that had not been privatized by year's end.

The Government's human rights record remained poor; although there were some improvements in a few areas, serious problems remained. Security forces committed a number of unlawful killings and at times beat and

mistreated detainees. Prison conditions remained poor. The Government continued to arrest and detain persons arbitrarily, particularly those suspected of sympathizing with or being members of the OLF. The Government ceased the detention and deportation without due process of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin. The Government released and repatriated under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 1,188 Eritrean prisoners of war (POWs) and 774 civilians during the year. Thousands of suspects remained in detention without charge, and lengthy pretrial detention continued to be a problem. The judiciary remained weak and overburdened. The Government infringed on citizen's privacy rights, and the law regarding search warrants was ignored widely. The Government restricted freedom of the press and continued to detain or imprison members of the press. Journalists continued to practice self-censorship. The Government at times restricted freedom of assembly; security forces used excessive force to disperse demonstrations. The Government limited freedom of association, but the nongovernmental organization (NGO) registration process continued to improve. On occasion local authorities infringed on freedom of religion. The Government restricted freedom of movement. Numerous internally displaced persons (IDPs) from internal ethnic conflicts remained in the country. During the year, neither the Human Rights Commission (HRC) nor the Office of the Ombudsman was operational. Violence and societal discrimination against women and abuse of children remained problems. Female genital mutilation (FGM) was widespread. The Government supported efforts to eliminate FGM and other harmful traditional practices. The exploitation of children for economic and sexual purposes remained a problem. Societal discrimination against persons with disabilities and discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities continued. Forced labor, including forced child labor, and child labor, particularly in the informal sector, continued to be a problem. There were reports of trafficking in persons.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

The security forces committed many unlawful killings, including some alleged political killings during the year. The number of unlawful killings during the year was estimated to be between 1,000 and 1,500. There continued to be numerous unconfirmed reports of unlawful killings by government security forces from Oromiya and the Somali regions.

For example, on July 18, soldiers shot and killed a 13-year-old boy who was returning home from a wedding party with four friends. The Government did not investigate the killing by year's end.

On July 21, soldiers shot and killed a 25-year-old driver who was walking back to his residence. The Government did not investigate the killing by year's end.

On November 10, the military opened fire on a crowd that began throwing stones at them, killing one person and injuring eight others, at a security checkpoint near Hartishek, outside the town of Jijiga in Somali region.

In December government security forces killed two persons in Kuraz Woreda in the town of Amorate, South Omo region.

During the year, the Government took no disciplinary action against members of the security forces responsible for the following 2001 killings: The January killing of 5 persons during riots between Christians and Muslims in Harar; the April killing of at least 31 Addis Ababa University (AAU) students during a violent demonstration; and the April killing of an Oromo Mekelle University student who had protested the violence at the AAU demonstrations.

During the year, the Government took no disciplinary action against members of the security forces responsible for the following 2000 killings: The February torturing and killing of two farmers in Soro; the March killing of a student who was attempting to assist another person who was being arrested; the March killing of Getu Driba in Ambo; the April killing of a student during a student demonstration in Dembi Dollo; the May killing of seven SEDPC supporters; and the December killing of a student during a demonstration in Awassa.

During the year, the Government completed its investigation of the 2000 case in which security forces killed two women in Hadiya zone while they were voting; however, the Government did not report on its findings or take any disciplinary action.

There was no action taken, nor any likely, against the persons responsible for the following 2000 and 2001

preelection and postelection killings: The January 2001 case in which rapid deployment forces of the federal and regional police killed 2 supporters during a meeting organized by the Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia (CAFPDE); the April 2001 case in which the army killed 4 Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) members in Badoacho, Shone Woreda; the case in which government forces killed at least 11 supporters of the SEPDC in the period leading up to the December 2001 elections; the 2000 case in which an EPRDF member killed 3 persons, including an opposition party election observer; the 2000 killing of 5 election observers, 1 opposition candidate, and 3 other persons when their cars either were struck by rockets or landmines; and the 2000 beating to death of a man detained allegedly in retaliation for election activities.

Security forces killed numerous persons while forcibly dispersing demonstrations during the year (see Sections 1.d. and 2.b.).

There were some deaths in custody during the year due to illness and disease (see Section 1.c.).

No action was taken, nor was any likely, in the July 2001 death in custody of an opposition party member who had been detained following the AAU student demonstration.

Government soldiers continued to operate in Somalia during the year (see Section 1.b.). No further information about the 2000 case of government soldiers killing two persons in Somaliland was available at year's end.

During the year, one person was killed by a landmine left over from the war with Eritrea. The U.N. reported that 64 persons died and 163 were injured by landmines in the Temporary Security Zone between January 2001 and November. In March a civilian demining unit began to survey and remove landmines from border areas.

On October 17, 4 children were killed in Higlo, in Gode Zone, after playing with unexploded ordnance left over from the 1977 war with Somalia.

On November 20, a child was killed and another seriously injured while playing with unexploded ordnance in a field near the town of Dire Dawa.

The OLF and ONLF continued to use landmines during the year. Some U.N. vehicles were hit by mines near Jigiga, resulting in injuries to personnel. On August 5, a bomb exploded at the Edom Hotel in the town of Jijiga, killing one person and injuring six others. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, although authorities believed the ONLF was responsible.

On September 11, a bomb killed four persons at the Tigray Hotel in Addis Ababa. The Government blamed the OLF for the attack and claimed to have arrested the perpetrators. The OLF denied responsibility for the attack.

There was no further information by year's end in the 2000 case in which landmines allegedly were used to derail a freight train near Nazareth or the 2001 arrests of five OLF members who allegedly committed the act.

Clashes between the Government and armed groups resulted in civilian deaths during the year. For example, on October 30, elements of the Ethiopian Patriotic Front, an armed Amhara dissident group, clashed with government troops; on November 5, they ambushed an army convoy killing 8 soldiers. Members of the army reportedly rounded up farmers in the area in retaliation for the killings, accused them of assisting the rebels, and summarily executed two residents. On October 31, the military killed 25 persons and injured 37 in fighting with elements of the ONLF, near the town of Luga on the Somalia border.

Ethnic clashes resulted in numerous deaths during the year (see Sections 2.d. and 5).

On February 19, bandits shot and killed a South African tourist at a roadblock outside Gondor.

According to the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), on July 22, armed men wearing masks forcibly removed four persons from their car, shot and killed three of them, including the head of the Southern Region's education bureau, and seriously injured the fourth between Awassa and Liku town. The identities of the armed men remained unknown; however, suspects in the killings were held incommunicado in a military camp in Awassa at year's end (see Section 2.b.).

On April 4, the Federal High Court convicted 10 Somalis, members of AIAI, for their role in 1995 and 1996 bombings.

The Federal High Court in Addis Ababa continued to arraign and prosecute 5,198 persons formally charged with genocide and other war crimes, including extrajudicial killings, under the previous Marxist Dergue regime (see Section 1.e.).

b. Disappearance

There were some reported cases of disappearances perpetrated by the Government during the year; however, none appeared to be politically motivated. In nearly all cases, security forces abducted persons without warrants and detained them in undisclosed locations for varying lengths of time ranging from weeks to months. For example, in response to the September 11 bombing at the Tigray Hotel in Addis Ababa (see Section 1.a.), on September 12, regional police officers took Mesfin Itana, an Oromo youth, from his place of work in the Merkato area because of suspected ties to the OLF. On September 13, police took several young Oromo businessmen from their places of work, and their whereabouts remained unknown at year's end. On September 18, the police took two brothers, Yilma Mosisa and Gdisa Mosisa, from their home, and their whereabouts also remained unknown at year's end.

On December 4, plainclothes policemen abducted well-known singer Raya Abamecha from his neighborhood in Addis Ababa. His whereabouts remained unknown at year's end.

During incursions into Somalia, government forces occasionally abducted persons. In one incident, government forces conducted an operation in southwest Somalia and captured a Somali colonel, who later was released.

There were reports in July that Anuak warriors abducted 32 Nuer IDPs from a bus taking them to Fugnido; the Government made little progress in its investigation of the disappearances, and the whereabouts of the 32 IDPs were unknown at year's end (see Section 2.d.).

The federal High Court in Addis Ababa continued to arraign and prosecute 5,198 persons charged with genocide and other war crimes under the previous regime, including the disappearance of 14,209 persons (see Section 1.e.).

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The Constitution prohibits the use of torture and mistreatment; however, there were several credible reports during the year that security officials often beat or mistreated detainees. There were reports that federal and local security forces harassed SEPDC supporters. Police also beat persons when intervening in clashes (see Section 2.c.).

In March there were reports from international refugee agencies that security forces detained and tortured three Sudanese refugees from the Fugnido camp in the Gambella Region (see Section 2.d.). There also were reports that the Government's refugee agency beat or otherwise physically abused Sudanese refugees in the Sherkole refugee camp during the year. By year's end, the Government refugee agency had failed to investigate credibly the allegations; however, the agency transferred to Addis Ababa one of its members accused of abusing refugees and placed him on "indefinite leave." The agency also agreed to a follow-up investigation comprised of agency representatives and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and NGO staff.

On August 4, local police in Addis Ababa forcibly drove away with batons approximately 800 runners participating in a 10 km road race organized by the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF) because the Addis Ababa Athletics Federation complained that the EAF lacked a municipal permit in a jurisdictional dispute. Dozens were injured as a result of the police intervention.

On December 30, police dragged Oromo student activist Gelan Nedhi Chewaka from his dormitory at the University of Mekelle and beat him until he lost consciousness. Gelan was left for dead on the university campus where fellow students discovered him the following morning. His condition reportedly was grave at year's end.

No action was taken during the year against members of the security forces responsible for torturing, beating, or abusing persons in the following 2001 cases: The January injuring of approximately 20 persons when government soldiers attempted to restore order after a riot broke out between Muslims and Christians in Harar; the April beating and injuring of at least 253 persons during the demonstrations at AAU; the April reported beating of women and young children after the forcibly entry into their homes by officers during the AAU demonstrations; the April beating of students and opposition party members detained after the AAU demonstrations; and the April beating of a group of mothers who were attempting to visit their children detained at Sendafa.

No action was taken against members of the security forces responsible for torturing, beating, or abusing the persons in the following 2000 cases: The March injuring of students during a demonstration; the beating of a man who was detained allegedly in retaliation for election activities; and the December beating to death of a man in detention.

No action was taken against the security forces responsible for beating or abusing persons in the following 2001 preelection and postelection cases: The April beating of Ayele Amore, an SEPDC supporter, in Badoacho; the April injuring of four SEPDC members during clashes between the army and the SEPDC in Badoacho in the Shone Woreda; and the May beating of Selfamo Kintamo, an elderly supporter of the SEPDC and the uncle of a SEPDC parliamentarian, in Soro.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports that security forces raped or sexually abused persons during arrests, detentions, or other government operations.

No action was taken against the security forces responsible for the June 2001 rape of two girls who took food to family members detained in Hosana or the July 2001 rape of a woman from Soro who was in temporary detention for her husband's involvement with the SEPDC.

Security forces injured numerous persons during the year while forcibly dispersing several demonstrations (see Section 2.b.).

There were more reports of injuries, and at least one reported death, caused by landmines (see Section 1.a.).

During the year, ethnic clashes resulted in numerous injuries (see Section 5).

Prison conditions were poor, and overcrowding remained a serious problem. Prisoners often were allocated fewer than 21.5 square feet of sleeping space in a room that could contain up to 200 persons. The daily meal budget was approximately 25 cents per prisoner per day. Prison food was inadequate, and many prisoners had family members deliver food every day or used their own funds to purchase food from local vendors. Prison conditions were unsanitary, and access to medical care was not reliable. There was no budget for prison facility maintenance. Prisoners typically were permitted daily access to prison yards, which often included working farms, mechanical shops, and rudimentary libraries. Prison letters must be written in Amharic, which made outside contact difficult for non-Amharic speakers; however, this restriction generally was not enforced.

Visitors generally were permitted; however, in September 50 detainees claimed that they were denied visits from relatives and friends. The SNNPS ordered the Federal Police Commission to correct its treatment of detainees involved in the May internecine clashes in Awassa after the Court considered claims from the 50 detainees of routine late night beatings by prison police. The detainees also complained of deliberate delays into the investigation of their cases and the suspension of their salaries.

There were some deaths in prison during the year due to illness and disease; however, no statistics on the number of deaths in prison were available at year's end.

Female prisoners were housed separately from men; however, juveniles sometimes were incarcerated with adults (see Section 5). Pretrial detainees often were detained separately from convicted prisoners at local police stations or in the limited Central Investigation Division (CID) detention facility in Addis Ababa until they were charged. By year's end, there still were 75 detainees at CID. The law requires that prisoners be transferred to federal prisons upon conviction; however, this requirement sometimes was not enforced in practice.

Approximately 2,000 Eritrean soldiers were captured as a result of fighting in 2000. Under ICRC auspices, the Government released and repatriated the last groups of POWs and civilian internees from the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. A total of 1,188 Eritrean POWs and 774 civilians were repatriated during the year. All registered prisoners from the conflict were released by year's end.

The Government permitted independent monitoring of prisons and police stations by the ICRC and by diplomatic missions. The ICRC generally had access to federal and regional prisons, civilian detention facilities, and police stations throughout the country during the year. The ICRC was allowed to meet regularly with prisoners without third parties being present. In addition to visiting the CID detention facility which held numerous persons whose cases were under investigation at year's end, the ICRC was permitted to visit regularly all of the 29 police stations in Addis Ababa during the year. During the year, the ICRC received government permission to visit military

detention facilities where suspected OLF fighters were detained. The Government generally gave the ICRC access to detention facilities that held Eritrean POWs, including the main camp at Dedesa. The ICRC also regularly visited civilian Eritrean nationals and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin detained on national security grounds. The ICRC also was permitted access to Zeway Prison, Showa Robit Prison, and other detention facilities; however, diplomats were not permitted access to these facilities.

Government authorities continued to permit diplomats to visit prominent detainees held by the SPO for alleged involvement in war crimes and terrorist activities, including former AAU President Alemayehu Tefera. In May Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA) President Taye Woldesemayat was released (see Section 1.d.). Mamo Wolde, former Dergue housing official and governor of Sidamo, who also was a 1968 Olympic marathon winner, was released in December 2001 after serving a 6-year sentence for murder but died a few months after his release (see Section 1.d.).

d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Constitution and both criminal and civil codes prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention; however, the Government did not respect these rights in practice. Under the criminal procedure code, any person detained must be informed of the charges within 48 hours and, in most cases, be offered release on bail. Suspects of serious offenses could be detained for 14 days while police conducted an investigation, if a panel of judges ordered it, and for additional 14-day periods while the investigation continued. In practice and especially in the outlying regions, authorities regularly detained persons without a warrant, did not charge them within 48 hours, and, if persons were released on bail, never recalled them to court. The Government provided public defenders for detainees who were unable to afford private legal counsel, but only when their cases came before the court. While in detention, such detainees were not able to confer with legal counsel.

The Constitution provides that arrested persons have the right to be released on bail; however, bail was not available for some offenses, such as murder, treason, and corruption. In most cases, bail was set between \$120 (1,000 birr) and \$1,200 (10,000 birr).

There were reports that in small towns, persons were detained in police stations for long periods without access to a judge and that sometimes these persons' whereabouts were unknown for several months.

The Government continued its harassment of teachers during the year, particularly in Oromiya. According to the ETA, approximately 142 teachers were detained and accused of being OLF sympathizers, many of whom still were in prison at year's end. For example, in Wollega Zone, 28 teachers were arrested and held for varying lengths of time before being released on bail. In the town of Ambo, West Shewa Zone, 4 teachers were imprisoned, and in Sendafa, North Shewa Zone, 7 teachers were arrested and later released in cases related to the April student unrest in Oromiya schools (see Section 2.b.). The ETA also claimed that government authorities detained, threatened, and later released dozens of teachers from West Shewa Zone, Harari Region, Hadia, Dersahe Special Woreda, and Konso for their involvement in a February ETA conference in Awassa.

Thousands of criminal suspects remained in detention without charge; many of the detainees were accused of involvement in OLF violent activities or were arrested after the April 2001 student demonstrations. Some detainees were held for years without being charged. Such cases were remanded at least 10 to 15 times, for 2 weeks each time, and courts allowed police to conduct investigations that continued for months. In addition, judges were shifted among cases, judges failed to show up for hearings, or new judges were not reassigned upon the death or incapacity of assigned judges in time for hearing dates. Detention conditions remained poor.

Police detained journalists during the year (see Section 2.a.).

Police detained persons for holding illegal meetings and demonstrations during the year, and several persons detained in previous years for illegal meetings and demonstrations remained in detention at year's end (see Section 2.b.).

In March security forces detained and tortured three Sudanese refugees (see Section 1.c.).

In response to attacks by armed opposition groups operating out of Somalia and Kenya (see Section 1.a.), the military again conducted operations in and around border areas during the year. The Government denied the presence of its military in those countries. These operations resulted in the capture and detention of hundreds of opposition fighters and their suspected supporters on both sides of these borders. The vast majority of these incidents took place in the Oromiya and Somali regional states. Several thousand persons allegedly associated

with armed opposition groups remained in detention at year's end. Most detainees were accused of participating in armed actions by the OLF or the ONLF. In typical cases, security forces arrested and held these persons incommunicado for several days or weeks before eventually releasing them. For example, on April 9, security forces arrested at least 60 members of the OLF for conspiring to commit terrorist acts in Oromia. Following the June bombing of the Dire Dawe train station, police detained many young Oromo males without warrants for questioning. Among those detained was Dinkinesh Deressa Kitila, an employee of Total/Elf oil company, who was arrested on June 7, and held at Karchale central prison on suspicion of being an OLF supporter. After the September bombing of the Tigray Hotel in Addis Ababa, the Government blamed the OLF and detained dozens of suspected OLF sympathizers without warrants (see Section 1.a.). The Government released some 600 OLF fighters during the year.

Parliamentary immunity protected members of the House from arrest or prosecution except in the act of committing a crime ("flagrante delicto"). The two representatives of the SEPDC in the Regional Council, who were arrested in 2001 on charges of inciting violence without having their parliamentary immunity formally revoked, were released on bail during the year. A third parliamentarian who was charged separately in connection with the killing of a police officer and whose immunity was revoked, remained in hiding at year's end.

In April the court remanded until February 2003 the May 2001 case of Berhanu Nega and Mesfin Woldemariam, two prominent academics and human rights activists, and charged them with inciting the AAU students to riot.

Moga Frissa, arrested in October 2001 on charges of subversion and alignment with a terrorist organization, remained free on bail with charges still pending at year's end. Aberra Aguma also remained free on bail.

On May 14, President Dr. Taye Woldesemayat was released from prison after 6 years in detention after the Supreme Court, under international pressure, overturned the lower court's 1999 conviction for treason. The charges for membership in an illegal organization were not overturned, and Taye was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. Charges against four other co-defendants were dropped.

In the months immediately before the 2001 regional elections, authorities harassed and detained supporters of parties belonging to the SEPDC opposition coalition. Numerous SEPDC supporters who authorities in the Southern Region detained in retaliation for voting for the opposition in the 2000 national elections were released, and nine SEPDC candidates for office remained in detention at year's end. The 104 persons still in detention at the end of 2001 were split between Hosana and Durame prisons. Since May when 15 detainees were released on bail, another 16 detainees in Hosana were ordered released upon payment of \$1,200 each (10,000 birr); however, all 16 remained in Hosana prison unable to post bail. In cases related to the elections, 38 SEPDC supporters were serving between 1- and 4-year sentences in Durame prison; another 16 SEPDC members arrested in part for illegal assembly in Durame remained in detention in Durame prison. The nine other SEPDC members who were detained for 3 years in connection with a murder in Siraro prison, Eastern Oromiya Zone, were released in December from Addis Ababa Central Prison because no evidence was found linking them to the crime (see Section 3).

During the year, approximately 50 elders, teachers, and civil servants charged with subversion following the 1999 student demonstrations were released.

The following detainees remained in custody at year's end: Alazar Dessie, an American citizen working as a consultant to the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, who was arrested for abusing his power and has been awaiting trial for more than 1½ years while not ever having been charged formally; 24 businessmen and government officials, including Seye Abraha and Bitew Belay, who were arrested in 2001 under allegations of corruption but never were charged formally; the official driver of the Eritrean Embassy, who was arrested in August 2001 and whose whereabouts remained unknown; 600 criminal detainees in the Oromiya region who were not charged, pending ongoing investigations; and 37 Oromos arrested in 1997 for their alleged involvement in OLF terrorist acts.

Several detainees at the Gondar Prison complained to government officials that they were detained without charge, some for years, while the police investigated their cases. Muche Berihun, who was charged with murder although the person whom he allegedly murdered was killed after he was detained, had been held in solitary confinement for 3½ years. In June his hearing began, and the court adjourned it until February 2003. He remained in detention at year's end. Wondante Mesfin has been in detention in Nefas Mewcha Prison in South Gondar Zone since 1994 and never has appeared in court nor been charged formally.

In 1997 the SPO formally charged 128 defendants with politically motivated genocide dating back to the 1976 "Red Terror" (see Section 1.e.). During the year, the Government acquitted 69 defendants and released 392 prisoners for lack of evidence. In December 2001, former Olympian Mamo Wolde, an official under the Derg regime, was released after serving a 6-year sentence for the state-sponsored killing of several teenage boys (see Section 1.c.).

The trial of former AAU president Alemeyehu Tefera, imprisoned since 1993, was pending at year's end. At year's end, witnesses still were being heard and evidence taken in the ongoing trials. Opposition groups alleged that some of the persons detained by the SPO were held for political reasons, and the Government denied that it held persons for political reasons.

The last group of approximately 200 civilian detainees of Eritrean origin who had been held at Dedesa internment camp were repatriated to Eritrea in November under ICRC auspices, and the Dedesa camp was closed. During the year, the Government transferred 219 Eritrean military deserters who also had been held at the Dedesa detention center to a refugee camp in northern Ethiopia (see Section 2.d.).

The ICRC participated in all repatriations to Eritrea, and under ICRC auspices, 1,188 POWs and 774 civilians were repatriated to Eritrea during the year (see Section 2.d.).

Exile was prohibited, and the Constitution provides that citizens shall not be deprived of their nationality against their wills. There were no reports of forced exile during the year. A number of persons remained abroad in self-imposed exile, including 43 journalists (see Section 2.a.). The Government stopped deporting forcibly Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin after it signed the cessation of hostilities agreement with Eritrea in June 2000.

Approximately 317 Ethiopian students who arrived in Kenya in 2001 following the April riots at Addis Ababa University were granted refugee status and remained at the Kakuma refugee camp in northwest Kenya at year's end. There was no new information during the year about students who reportedly fled to Djibouti after the April riots at AAU.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary remained weak and overburdened. Although the federal and regional courts continued to show signs of judicial independence, in practice severe shortages of adequately trained personnel in many regions, as well as serious financial constraints, combined to deny many citizens the full protections provided in the Constitution.

Consistent with the Constitution, the Government continued to decentralize and restructure the judiciary along federal lines with the establishment of courts at the district (woreda), zonal, and regional levels. The federal High Court and federal Supreme Court heard and adjudicated original and appeal cases involving federal law, transregional issues, and national security. The regional judiciary increasingly was autonomous, with district, zonal, high, and supreme courts mirroring the structure of the federal judiciary. There were two three-judge benches at the High Court level to handle criminal cases. The SPO delegated some of the war crimes trials to the supreme courts in the regions where the crimes allegedly were committed, which increased the efficiency of the process.

Regional offices of the federal Ministry of Justice monitored local judicial developments, and the regional courts had jurisdiction over both local and federal matters, but the federal judicial presence in the regions was limited nevertheless. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some local officials believed they were not accountable to a higher authority.

To remedy the severe lack of experienced staff in the judicial system, the Government continued to identify and train lower court judges and prosecutors, although officials acknowledged that the pay scale offered did not attract the required numbers of competent professionals. Senior government officials charged with judicial oversight estimated that the creation of a truly independent and skilled judicial apparatus would take decades. The Government welcomed foreign financial and technical assistance to accelerate this process. Pending the passage by regional legislatures of laws particular to their region, all judges will be guided by the federal procedural and substantive codes.

According to the Constitution, accused persons have the right to a public trial by an ordinary court of law within a reasonable time after having been charged. Accused persons have the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choice. However, in practice, lengthy pretrial detention was common, closed proceedings occurred, and at times, detainees were allowed little or no contact with their legal counsel (see Section 1.d.). Defendants did not enjoy a presumption of innocence in practice, although the Constitution provides for it in theory. The public defender's office provides legal counsel to indigent defendants, although its scope remained severely limited, especially with respect to trials of the SPO. The law does not allow the defense access to prosecutorial evidence before the trial.

The Constitution provides legal standing to some preexisting religious and customary courts and gives federal and

regional legislatures the authority to recognize other courts. By law all parties to a dispute must agree before a customary or religious court may hear a case. Shari'a (Islamic) courts may hear religious and family cases involving Muslims. In addition, other traditional courts still functioned. Although not sanctioned by law, these courts resolved disputes for the majority of citizens who lived in rural areas and who generally had little access to formal judicial systems.

The outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea adversely impacted the military justice system. Most foreign assistance to train officers and noncommissioned officers was suspended at the same time that the rapid expansion of the military greatly increased the need for trained military lawyers and judges. This training need remained unmet by year's end.

The SPO was established in 1992 to create an historical record of the abuses committed during the Mengistu Government and to bring to justice those criminally responsible for human rights violations. The SPO had the authority to arrest and interrogate anyone suspected of involvement in the Red Terror Campaign under Mengistu. The federal High Court considered the cases of 2,658 defendants accused of genocide, war crimes, and aggravated homicide. Trials began in 1994 and continued during the year; however, the process was subject to frequent and lengthy adjournments. Court appointed attorneys, sometimes with inadequate skills and experience, represented many of the defendants, following claims that they could not afford an adequate defense. The SPO reported that as of April 30, of the 6,426 defendants who were awaiting trial, 2,952 were tried in absentia, including former dictator Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, who remained in exile in Zimbabwe. A total of 1,569 cases had decisions handed down; of these 1,017 persons were convicted. During the year, the Government acquitted 69 defendants and released 392 prisoners for lack of evidence. In October the Federal High Court announced that all the cases of defendants indicted on charges of genocide and crime against humanity would be completed by September 2003. Cases were handled more quickly than in previous years; however, most cases still were in progress at year's end (see Section 1.d.). In 2001 the SPO opened a new case against persons accused of participating in the 1987 Hawzein Massacre; the majority of those named in the file have been charged already with other offenses. There was no further information on the status of this case by year's end.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home or Correspondence

The law requires judicial search warrants to search private property; however, in practice warrants seldom were obtained outside of Addis Ababa.

There continued to be reports that police forcibly entered the homes of civilians. There also were reports that security forces took persons from their homes in the middle of the night without warrants.

Property and money belonging to the ETA that was seized following the arrest of Dr. Taye had not yet been returned to the ETA (see Section 1.d.). The next hearing regarding ETA property seized by the Government was set for March 2003.

At year's end, police had not returned confiscated documents taken during a May 2001 raid on EHRCO's offices in violation of a revised court order.

The Government arbitrarily monitored private communication such as Internet communications and cellular phone conversations. All electronic communications facilities were state-owned.

There were credible reports during the year of the forced displacement of families in rural areas. One displaced farmer said that in April, in the Abe Dongero Woreda in East Wellega Zone of Oromiya, the woreda administrator allegedly ordered the forced eviction of approximately 250 Amhara persons from their land to make the land available to a business investor. An Oromia Regional Government official acknowledged that a problem existed in the woreda and that the Government was studying the issue.

In July there were credible reports from the EHRCO that the Government, in an attempt to "clean up" Addis Ababa, forcibly resettled approximately 200 homeless persons to an area nearly 30 miles outside of the city. In September city bulldozers demolished approximately 10,000 shacks.

There were more credible reports during the year from EHRCO and opposition parties that in certain rural areas, local officials used threats of land redistribution and withholding of food aid and fertilizer to garner support for the ruling coalition. There also were credible reports that teachers and other government workers have had their employment terminated if they were not of the dominant ethnic group in their region. According to the SEPDC, some SEPDC supporters were suspended or dismissed from their jobs in retaliation for voting for the opposition in

the 2000 elections (see Section 3).

People from rural areas suffering from famine and drought who came to Addis Ababa sometimes were returned forcibly to their villages. In December approximately 300 famine victims from Western Hararghe Zone of Oromia Region were ordered by security forces to return to their villages. When they refused, security forces rounded them up and forcefully transported them in buses back to their villages.

The Family Law Code imposes a 6-month waiting period on anyone seeking to remarry following a divorce or the death of one's spouse (see Section 5). The Government maintained that this waiting period was necessary to determine whether a woman may still be carrying the child of her former spouse.

Security forces detained family members of persons sought for questioning by the Government.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press; however, the Government used legal and other mechanisms to restrict these rights in practice. For example, the Government continued to prosecute journalists and editors for publishing articles that violated the law. Some journalists practiced self-censorship, calling their business a "guessing game." However, the private press remained active and often published articles that were extremely critical of the Government.

According to the Constitution, citizens generally were free to discuss publicly any topic they choose; however, on occasion the Government restricted this right in practice. During the year, several groups critical of the Government held press conferences and public meetings without retribution, and several opposition parties held press conferences that were covered by both the private and the government press. The Government continued to oppose activities and operations of groups that were critical of it, such as the ETA (see Section 2.b.).

There were a total of 81 newspapers, 22 magazines, and 2 news agencies. Out of the total number of newspapers, there were approximately 34 private Amharic-language weekly newspapers, 7 English-language weeklies, and 1 English-language daily. Circulation figures ranged from 2,000 to 20,000 copies each. In addition to the private press, there were 3 ruling party coalition papers, in Amharic, Oromifa, and Tigrigna, which had a total circulation figure of approximately 70,000. There were 2 government dailies, the English-language Ethiopian Herald (circulation 40,000) and the Amharic Addis Zemen (circulation 50,000), and a government Arabic-language weekly, Al-Alam (circulation 10,000).

The official media, including broadcast, wire service, and print media received government subsidies; however, they legally were autonomous and responsible for their own management and partial revenue generation. The Government's press and information department acted as an official spokesperson and managed contacts between the Government, the press, and the public. The office of the Government spokesperson and information sections of government ministries routinely refused to respond to queries from the private press and limited their cooperation with the press to the government-run Ethiopian News Agency, the ruling party-run Walta news agency, and correspondents of international news organizations. Government reporters practiced self-censorship.

Generally the Government permitted private newspapers and news organizations to attend government briefings and press conferences, and some government officials provided information and granted interviews to private journalists. However, there were instances when members of the independent press were barred from attending press conferences given by government agencies, such as one given by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission in July where only the ruling-party Walta Information Agency and the government-owned Ethiopian News Agency were allowed to cover the event. The Prime Minister's office continued to deny all access to the independent press for coverage of official events at the Prime Minister's office.

The Ministry of Information and Culture required that newspapers show a bank balance of \$1,200 (10,000 birr) at the time of their annual registration for a license to publish. This substantial sum of money effectively precluded some smaller publications from registering. Although the requirement was not enforced strictly, the Ministry of Information and Culture noted publicly that many papers were not in compliance and could be closed down on short notice. Permanent residency also was required to establish a newspaper. The Government did not require this of other businesses, and some independent journalists maintained that the residency requirement was used as a form of intimidation.

The majority of private papers as well as government papers were printed at government-owned presses. However, a few private papers started using smaller private printing presses, one of which was owned by the publisher of the Daily Monitor. All EPRDF publications were printed at the party-run Mega Publishing Enterprise. Police had the authority to shut down those printing presses without a court order. Amare Aregawi, editor of The Reporter, an independent newspaper, asserted that his paper's dependency on a government-owned printing press was used against him when he wanted to publish an article concerning the U.N. Boundary Commission's decision earlier in the year. He alleged that the Government printing press technicians were "conveniently absent" on every occasion that he sought to have the article published.

Despite the constant threat of legal action, the private press remained active and continued to publish articles critical of the Government and to report on human rights abuses. Many private newspapers continued to publish inaccurate information, unsubstantiated stories, and harsh antigovernment articles without any official penalty.

While much of the private press continued to lack professionalism in its reporting, some print media were developing into more responsible publications. Others were opposition newsletters that often purveyed unsubstantiated criticism of the Government. Several were tied to distinct ethnic groups, especially the Amharas and Oromos, and severely criticized the Government for being ethnocentric.

The Government used statutory provisions concerning publishing false information, inciting ethnic hatred, libel, and publishing articles offensive to public morality to justify the arrest and detention of journalists.

Police beat journalists during the year (see Section 2.c.).

During the year, six journalists were detained. On April 3, the First Criminal Bench of the Federal High Court arrested and sentenced Lubaba Seid, former editor-in-chief of Tarik, to 1 year of imprisonment, but granted her parole in late December. The court found Lubaba guilty of violating the Press Law by disseminating "fabricated news that could have a negative psychological effect on members of the Defense Army and disturb the minds of the persons." Lubaba was charged for reports in the August 1996 issue of Tarik newspaper entitled "An OPDO cadre who replaced Samora Yenus in Eastern Oromiya has defected," and "The President's personal security guards are said to have defected." Tarik had been shut down for several years, but published for a few months in 2000 before it was forced to shut down again.

On July 10, the Federal High Court arrested and sentenced Tewodros Kassa, former editor of Ethop, to 2 years in prison. He was charged with publishing "false information that could incite people to political violence," and for libel against a businessman. Tewodros previously had served a 1-year sentence.

In July Zegeye Haile, editor-in-chief of Genanaw, was arrested after his guarantor lifted his bail guarantee for previous press charges. Zegeye was in detention at the Addis Ababa Central Prison pending a new bail guarantor at year's end, and no other details were available on his pending cases or the bail amount. Genanaw has been closed for more than 2 years.

Three journalists were detained and released after paying bail during the year: Gizaw Taye Wordofa, editor of Lamrot, who was detained on charges of publishing articles offensive to public morality; Melese Shine, editor of Ethop newspaper and magazine, who was detained on March 20 in connection with a defamatory article on Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and a published interview with a "rebel" colonel under the previous regime; and Tsegaye Ayalew, editor-in-chief of Genanaw, who was detained in November 2001 on unknown charges, but released on September 15 after posting approximately \$125 bail.

A number of journalists were summoned to the Central Criminal Investigation Office during the year on various charges and released on bail: Tsega Mogus, editor-in-chief of Zarenaw, who was charged with incitement to violence; Kidushabte Belachew, editor-in-chief of Mebrek, who was charged with violating the Press Law and the Penal Code; and Daniel Gezahegn, editor of Moged, who was accused of slandering Major-General Bacha Debella, a government official.

Two journalists were fined for press charges. On March 1, the Federal High Court fined Kifle Mulat, former editor-in-chief of Ethio-Time and current president of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFPJA), \$1,300 (12,000 birr) on charges of disseminating false information and violating the Press Law in a 1997 article in Ethio-Time in which he compared the current regime to the preceding Derg regime. Kifle paid the fine the same day and was released.

On July 31, Tesfa Tegegn, publisher of Ethop, was charged with parodying the name and dignity of government

leaders and the head of Government. Two of the charges were dropped but Tesfa was fined \$400 (4,000 birr) for his satire of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, and he was detained for 5 days at the Addis Ababa Central Prison until he paid the fine.

Some journalists arrested in 2001 were released on bail during the year. Tamrat Zuma, editor-in-chief of the defunct Amharic-language weekly Atkurot, was released after he obtained bail money from international press institutions and human rights groups through EFPJA. The case against Temrat still was pending at year's end, and Atkurot has been closed for more than 3 years. There was no further information regarding Zemedkur Mogus at year's end.

Robel Mitiku, editor-in-chief of Goh, also was released early in the year after posting bail of \$1,200 (10,000 birr). No information was available about the charges filed against him, and Goh has been closed for over two years.

Approximately 30 journalists had trials pending at year's end.

At year's end, about 43 journalists remained in self-imposed exile, including Dawit Kebede, editor-in-chief of the defunct Fiameta; Israel Seboka, the editor-in-chief of Seife Nebelbal newspaper; Samson Seyoum Kebede, the former editor of Goh; Yohannes Abebe, a journalist for Goh; Berhan Hailu, editor of Wegahta; and three journalists of Urjii, Tesfaye Deressa, Solomon Nemera, and Garoma Bekele, who left the country for Canada during the year.

The Government did not ban or shut down any newspaper or publication during the year. Newspapers critical of government leaders and their policies were available widely in the capital but scarce elsewhere, although circulation in the regional capitals increased during the year.

On July 25, in discussions with a delegation of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Minister of Information Bereket Simon said that a new draft press law had been prepared "with the aim to encourage constructive and responsible journalism." A number of private newspapers reported that the new law would be even more restrictive, and that the Ministry also was drafting a code of ethics for journalists. During the year, there were two laws that governed the press: The 1957 Penal Code and the 1992 Press Law. Independent journalists accused the Government of selectively applying sections of the Penal Code to levy charges against journalists and applying sections of the 1992 press law for penalizing them.

Radio remained the most influential medium for reaching citizens, especially those who live in rural areas. Although the law allows for private radio stations, regulations were not implemented, and there were no truly independent radio stations. Two nongovernmental stations, Radio Fana, a station controlled by the ruling EPRDF coalition, and the TPLF radio, which broadcast in the Tigrigna language from Mekele, had close ties to the Government. Broadcasting time on the state-run Radio Ethiopia was sold to private groups and to individuals who wanted to buy spots for programs and commercials. The Government operated the sole television station, and news was controlled tightly. The state-run ETV continued to broadcast "TV Africa," which was contracted from a South African company. There were no restrictions on access to international news broadcasts. Ownership of private satellite receiving dishes and the importation of facsimile machines and modems were permitted; however, access to this technology was limited by its cost.

In January the Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency, created in 1999 to review applications for private radio and television licenses, started recruiting staff and organizing the office, but did not start issuing broadcast licenses. In January the Addis Broadcasting Company acquired a business license from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, but it was unable to start any radio or television broadcasting until licensed by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Agency. Private entities that would like to be broadcasters continued to claim that the delay in implementing the broadcast law was deliberate.

The Government prohibited political parties and religious organizations from owning stations; foreign ownership also was prohibited.

Foreign journalists continued to operate freely and often wrote articles critical of government policies. They or their local affiliates were granted greater access to government officials than were local independent journalists. Several foreign news organizations maintained bureaus or offices in Addis Ababa; the majority of these were staffed with local journalists, and they usually operated free of government restriction.

The EFPJA continued to be active during the year organizing journalism training workshops and issuing statements to press advocates and human rights organizations inside and outside the country on the arrests and harassment of journalists. The Ethiopian Journalists Association (EJA), which included only government and party

journalists, was not active during the year.

The Ethiopian Women's Media Association (EWMA), which included both government and private journalists, remained active during the year; the EWMA organized training and workshops and printed a journal.

Internet access was provided through the government-controlled telecommunications company, which maintained a waiting list for new accounts. In August subscription fees were reduced by 43 percent and rates by 50 percent. The number of subscribers reached 8,000 after a major technical upgrade was completed and more reliable service was provided. The Government issued further regulations for licensing private Internet service providers (ISP's); however, no private ISP's were operating at year's end. Private satellite transmission uplinks generally were not allowed. Outside the capital, Internet services were installed in nine cities that also served the surrounding localities.

The Government did not respect academic freedom during the year. The government maintained that professors could research any field within their discipline but that they could not espouse political sentiments. In March all students, including those involved in the April 2001 riots except for 14, were allowed to return to AAU. In July Prime Minister Meles met with university professors in an effort to inform them of government policies and to discuss democratization and educational issues; however, participants claimed that the Prime Minister did not address many of their concerns. The ETA claimed that uniformed police officers were visible on campuses and that plainclothes security officers tried to blend in with the student body. Teachers were not permitted to deviate from official lesson plans. Political activity was discouraged on university campuses. After the April 2001 riots, students were forbidden to form associations on the basis of their ethnicity. Many student leader activists fled the country after the riots. While in theory student governments were permitted, many students refrained from involvement in any on-campus activity that could be considered political in nature by the Government. According to a survey conducted by the ETA of 280 public universities and secondary schools throughout the country, nearly 90 percent of the school directors and vice-directors of those schools belonged to the ruling party or its affiliates.

Three top AAU administration officials resigned their posts in December in view of growing government interference in internal university matters. Government officials wanted AAU to change its system of student evaluations to conform to a "gemgema" (self-criticism) system favored by the ruling party. Government officials also reportedly sought to influence the establishment of a pro-government student union at AAU.

During the year, police killed and injured numerous persons while forcibly dispersing student demonstrations (see Section 2.b.).

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly; however, on several occasions the Government restricted this right in practice. Organizers of large public meetings or demonstrations must notify the Government in advance and obtain a permit. There were no reports that any permits were denied; however, there were long unexplained delays in issuing permits and last minute revocations of permits, which hindered the ability of groups to organize events.

The independent ETA continued to have problems organizing seminars in certain regions. In January the ETA paid the equivalent of \$105 (900 birr) to rent the meeting hall of the Sidama Zone Culture Department for 3 days. After taking the money, the Culture Department refused to allow the ETA use of the meeting hall and also refused to return ETA's money (see Section 6.a.).

Police killed and injured numerous students while forcibly dispersing demonstrations during the year. For example, on March 25, security forces killed at least three students and arrested several hundred others during a protest led by high school students in the West Shoa and East and West Wellega Zones of the Oromiya Region over the Government's new education policy and rising food prices. NGOs reported that police killed eight students. The Government did not investigate the killings and took no action against the responsible security forces. Following the March student protests in East and West Wellega Zones, at least 13 teachers reportedly were arrested and detained in Ambo, and several other persons were taken from Guder, a small town close to Ambo, western Shoa, Oromiya region. The Oromia Regional Government reported that the teachers were accused of inciting students to riot and spreading OLF propaganda.

In April security forces used live ammunition to stop unarmed student demonstrators in the zonal capitals of Nekempe, Ghimbi, and Ambo. There were no reports of beatings or killings during the April protests. Approximately 100 demonstrators were arrested for their association with the OLF. None of the detained

demonstrators were charged officially; all except for nine subsequently were released after posting bail. Those nine persons remained in detention in Meta Robi at year's end.

On May 24, according to official government reports, police killed 15 protesters and injured 25 in Awassa, the capital of the Southern Region. The opposition SEPDC alleged that security forces killed 51 persons (2 of whom were local police officers trying to convince the crowd to disperse peacefully) and injured 44 persons. EHRCO reported that police killed 5 student demonstrators and seriously injured at least a dozen others with gunfire. The protesters were from the Sidama ethnic group and were demonstrating their opposition to a plan to make Awassa a chartered city, which would remove it from the Sidama Zone. Government officials accused the protesters of demonstrating without a permit and stated that security forces fired only after the protesters threatened them. The Government has refused to allow an independent investigation of the incident, and has appointed the Vice President of the Southern Region, who himself reportedly was implicated in the conflict, to head the Government's internal investigation. Since the May violence in Awassa, police arrested some 40 demonstrators. Approximately 30 of them were released on bail at different times after appearing before the Southern Region's Supreme Court in October. The remaining 10 still were in prison in Awassa. Seven other individuals arrested in cases related to the Awassa demonstration and the killing of the head of the Southern Region's education bureau were held incommunicado in a military camp in Awassa (see Section 1.a.). EHRCO reported that the Government fired approximately 180 zonal and regional police officers for alleged complicity with demonstrators.

There was no investigation during the year of actions taken by security forces following the April 2001 riots at AAU. The 14 Oromo students who were expelled from the university for alleged subversive activity remained suspended from attending classes because of their involvement in the demonstration on campus (see Section 2.a.). There were no new reports of expulsions on similar grounds during the year. There were no reports of beatings or killings by police of any demonstrators during the April protests.

Police also dispersed meetings during the year and arrested numerous persons. For example, in February the police dispersed a conference organized by the ETA in Awassa. There were 587 teachers in attendance along with some officials from foreign embassies. After 3 hours, the police permitted the ETA to resume its meeting. Since that meeting, the ETA reported that police detained 37 teachers from the SNNPRS who attended the conference. All but one later were released on bail. The police also called in 12 teachers from Oromiya and gave them stern warnings never to participate again in such meetings. In October the ETA received notification that at least one teacher who attended the Awassa conference still was in detention in a prison in the town of Bonga, Kaffa Zone.

On August 3, local police dispersed the biweekly meeting of the Addis Ababa Teachers Association (AATA), an affiliate of the ETA, because the AATA did not have municipal permission to hold that meeting, even though the meeting was held in AATA offices. The AATA tried to schedule another meeting on September 6, but that also was broken up by local police on the same grounds.

On October 15, police fired into the air to disperse a crowd of 4,000 farmers gathered at a meeting of the Ethiopian Democratic Union Party (EDUP) in Este Woreda in the village of Dankura Maryam, South Gonder Zone. EDUP officials maintained they had a valid permit for their meeting. Police beat many of the farmers, injuring 50 seriously, and kept dozens in detention for a week.

Unlike in the previous year, persons were not arrested for holding SEPDC meetings.

Of the 10 opposition candidates arrested in January 2001 and charged with holding an illegal meeting organized by the CAFPDE, Eastern Shoa Zone, Oromia regional state, 9 remained in custody. The tenth was released on bail because he was not from that area. Those candidates were arrested for campaigning illegally although the law permits campaigning during that time. After the riots in which police killed two CAFPDE supporters, the candidates were charged with incitement to violence and the killings of the two CAFPDE supporters (see Section 1.d.).

No action was taken against the security forces responsible for killing or injuring persons while forcibly dispersing the following 2000 demonstrations: The March demonstration in Ambo, the April demonstration in Dembi Dolo, and the December demonstration in Awassa.

During the year, approximately 50 elders, teachers, and civil servants charged with subversion following the 1999 student demonstrations were released.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the right to engage in unrestricted peaceful political activity; however, the Government limited this right in practice. Although the NGO registration process improved significantly, a number of policy issues regarding NGOs remained unresolved. The Ministry of Justice governed

primary registration. In 2000 an inter-ministerial committee convened by the Ministry of Justice completed a draft of the revised NGO registration legislation without consulting NGOs; the legislation still was pending at year's end. The HRL, closed in 1998 for its alleged connections to the OLF, continued to wait to get an operating license (see Section 4).

The Government required political parties to register with the National Election Board. Parties that did not participate in two consecutive national elections were subject to deregistration. Registered political parties also must receive permission from regional governments to open local offices. There were 58 organized political parties; 8 were national parties, and the remainder operated only in limited areas. There were no reports during the year that any political party had its registration revoked.

c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, on occasion local authorities infringed on this right. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) was the dominant religion.

The Government required that religious groups be registered. Religious institutions register with the Ministry of Justice and must renew their registration every year. Under the law, a religious organization that undertakes development activities must register its development wing separately as an NGO. Religious groups were given free government land for churches, schools, hospitals, and cemeteries; however, the title to the land remained with the Government, and the land, other than that used for prayer houses or cemeteries, could be taken back at any time. An interfaith effort was underway during the year to promote revision of the law for religious organizations to obtain duty-free status.

Minority religious groups complained of discrimination in the allocation of government land for religious sites. Protestant groups occasionally complained that local officials discriminated against them when seeking land for churches and cemeteries. Evangelical leaders complained that because they were perceived as "newcomers" they remained at a disadvantage compared with the EOC and the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) in the allocation of land. The EIASC complained that it had more difficulty obtaining land from the government bureaucracy than the EOC while others believed that it was favored for mosque locations. Many mosques were built by squatters without city government approval and since have been targeted for demolition.

The Government did not issue work visas to foreign religious workers unless they were attached to the development wing of a religious organization.

Muslim leaders complained that public school authorities occasionally interfered with their free practice of Islam. Some public school teachers in the SNNPR, Addis Ababa, and in the Amhara region objected to Muslim schoolgirls covering their heads with scarves while at school. Muslim leaders stated that in some schools, Muslim girls went without head coverings to avoid similar problems.

Under the Press Law, it is a crime to incite one religion against another. The Press Law also allows for defamation claims involving religious leaders to be prosecuted as criminal cases. The charges against Tilahun Bekele, publisher of Netsanet; Daniel Gezahegn, deputy editor-in-chief of Mogedwere; and Samson Seyoum Kebede, the former editor of Goh, were pending at year's end. Samson was convicted on five counts of incitement to war and for spreading Islamic fundamentalism in reports published in Agere. No information was available on how much of his 4½-year sentence he served before being released. According to the EFPJA, Samson left the country and reported to the East African Journalists' Association office, based in Nairobi.

There were more than 6,000 members of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country. The Government continued its policy of not deporting members of Jehovah's Witnesses of Eritrean origin, who might face religious repression in Eritrea (see Section 2.d.).

Several inter-religious clashes resulted in deaths and injuries. For example, on January 19, in Kemisse in the Amhara Region, one person was killed during a clash between Muslims and Christians. According to police reports, they arrested several persons for organizing the disruption or throwing rocks at a procession; however, all of those arrested subsequently were released. It remained unknown who was responsible for the killing at year's end.

On July 17, a clash between Ethiopian Orthodox followers and Protestants in Amhara Region resulted in the death of one person, and eight others were seriously injured. The local police did not intervene, and no action was taken

against those responsible by year's end.

On November 18 and December 27, confrontations between members of Lideta Maryam Orthodox Parish in Addis Ababa and Ethiopian Orthodox Church officials over alleged corruption by church officials appointed by the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church turned violent when police raided the church compound and forcibly dispersed members of the congregation who were assembled in prayer. Police killed one man and injured dozens. According to the EHRCO, police indiscriminately beat many persons in the compound, including nuns, monks, elderly women, and other bystanders. A Federal Police officer severely beat Voice of America journalist Helen Mohammed when she tried to gain access to the Lideta Church compound on December 27. Police also beat Tobia reporter Yonas Wolde Senbet and confiscated his camera at the church. According to EHRCO, after the raid, police detained approximately 700 persons at Kolfe police training camp and subjected them to physical abuse. Many complained they were doused with water, forced to crawl on gravel, and denied food and water for most of the 5 days they were in detention. Police required them to sign statements under duress admitting to their roles in inciting riots at the church before they could be released.

On December 29, a riot broke out between Orthodox and Protestant worshippers in Mekelle, Tigray Region, at Adventist prayer service being conducted in a stadium. Some Orthodox followers, upset by the display of public Adventist preaching, reportedly sparked the clashes by first throwing stones at Adventist followers gathered in the stadium, then by looting Adventist offices in the city. Police intervened to break up the riots, which resulted in five dead and three seriously injured. The police reported that 10 people were detained, but independent sources placed the figure much higher.

Leaders of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC) struggled during the year with Wahibbist fundamentalism within their ranks. The growing influence of radical elements within Islamic communities in the country, aided by funding from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states for mosque construction, continued to concern the EIASC.

For a more detailed discussion see the 2002 International Religious Freedom Report.

d. Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for these rights; however, the Government restricted them in practice.

The Government modified its policy regarding the detention and deportation of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin to Eritrea after it signed a cessation of hostilities agreement with Eritrea in 2000. Detention and deportation was carried out only in conjunction with the ICRC. The Government, together with the ICRC, monitored the deportation or repatriation of 1,188 Eritrean POWs and 774 Eritrean civilians during the year. In 2001 approximately 80,000 to 100,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin resided in the country; there were no updated statistics by year's end. All Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were registered with the Government and held identity cards and 6-month residence permits to gain access to hospitals and other public services.

During the year, the Government transferred some 219 Eritrean military deserters who had been held at the Dedessa detention center to a northern refugee camp. Given the improbability that any of the deserters could be repatriated to Eritrea, UNHCR had processed most of them for possible resettlement to third countries by year's end.

The law requires citizens and residents to obtain an exit visa before departing the country. Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were able to obtain exit visas but often were not permitted to return to the country. Since the signing of the Algiers agreement in December 2000, ICRC has facilitated the repatriation of approximately 997 Ethiopian and 1,388 Eritrean POWs (see Section 1.d.). On November 27, the Government released more than 1,200 Eritrean POWs, and at year's end, there were no more registered prisoners from the conflict.

In Addis Ababa and western Gondar in the Amhara region, there were very small concentrations of Ethiopian Jews (Falashas), most of whom have emigrated to Israel, and those who claimed that their ancestors were forced to convert from Judaism to Ethiopian Orthodoxy (Feles Mora). Many Feles Mora immigrated to Israel; the Government did not restrict their ability to do so. Israeli Embassy officials reported that all eligible Feles Moras were processed for immigration to Israel. Approximately 17,000 Feles Mora remained in the country awaiting immigration at year's end.

Some codefendants from the All Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), convicted in 1992 on charges of treason, completed their prison sentences in 1998 and 1999 and were permitted to leave the country during the year. Former members of AAPO were appealing to the court to secure pension rights they lost when they were sentenced, but had not been successful by year's end. A hearing was set for March 2003.

The number of Ethiopian students detained at the Kakuma refugee camp in northwest Kenya following the April 2001 riots in Addis Ababa declined from 317 to 247. The UNHCR reported that despite fears of detention, many students voluntarily returned to Ethiopia during the year. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), security forces bribed Kenyan police to harass, intimidate, and arbitrarily arrest Ethiopian refugees in Nairobi.

As a result of the conflict with Eritrea, numerous persons were displaced internally. The Government presented relief and rehabilitation proposals for these IDPs to bilateral donors and NGOs. The World Food Program reported that approximately 75,000 IDPs remained in the country along the border with Eritrea. There originally were approximately 300,000 IDPs following the border war; however, approximately 225,000 IDPs were resettled.

Due to violent clashes between different ethnic groups during the year, thousands of persons were killed, injured, and displaced internally (see Section 5). For example, on November 27, ethnic clashes within the Fugnido camp between Dinka and Nuer refugees left 39 refugees dead and 9 injured. The UNHCR reported that Ethiopian authorities arrested and detained four officials of the Fugnido municipal government and several Gambella regional officials in connection with the massacre. UNHCR and officials of the Government's refugee agency have pledged to create a committee comprised of regional and federal agencies to investigate the causes of the Fugnido clashes and massacre. There were reports that Anuak warriors abducted 32 Nuer IDPs from a bus taking them to Fugnido; the Government made little progress in its investigation of the disappearances, and the whereabouts of the 32 IDPs were unknown at year's end.

The law provides for the granting of asylum and refugee status in accordance with the provisions of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Government generally cooperated with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees and returning citizens.

The country hosted approximately 138,816 refugees; most were from Somalia and Sudan. The Government in cooperation with the UNHCR continued to provide first asylum to refugees from Sudan and Somalia. Along the border of northwest Somalia, approximately 49,000 Somali refugees were resident in 3 camps at year's end, a decrease from 70,000 Somali refugees in 6 camps in 2001. Along the Sudanese border approximately 85,000 Sudanese refugees were resident in 5 refugee camps around Gambella and Asosa at year's end. The UNHCR reported that approximately 120 of the 450 armed rebels from Sudan awaiting transfer at the end of 2001 were admitted to one of the Sudanese refugee camps inside Ethiopia. The UNHCR also noted that some of those held at the end of 2001 returned voluntarily.

There were approximately 4,335 Eritrean Kunama refugees and a small population of urban refugees from other countries at year's end. During the year, government military forces took over a new refugee camp for security reasons, forcing the refugees to remain in a nearby camp with inadequate health, education, water, and sanitation facilities.

In January there were credible reports that in December 2001, security forces tortured three Sudanese refugee leaders following disturbances at Fugnido refugee camp in the western part of the country. There also were reports that staff members of the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) physically abused Sudanese refugees at the Sherkole Camp. For example, in June ARRA staff members kicked and beat a refugee who was trying to collect rations during a revalidation exercise. By year's end, there were no indications that the Government had investigated these incidents (see Section 1.c.).

Refugees at Sherkole also complained of conflict with local residents over scarce resources. They claimed that local villagers had attacked, and in some cases sexually assaulted, women who had gone to collect firewood outside of designated collection points for camp residents.

There were no reports during the year of the forced return of persons to a country where they feared persecution.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully and allows for the right of secession. The Constitution grants universal adult (18 years of age) suffrage, establishes periodic elections by secret ballot, and allows citizens to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly and through freely chosen

representatives; however, in practice the EPRDF ruling party dominated the Government. According to observers organized by EHRCO, local U.N. staff, diplomatic missions, political parties, and domestic NGOs, the 2000 national elections and the 2001 regional elections were generally free and fair in most areas but were marred by serious irregularities, including killings, disappearances, voter intimidation and harassment, and unlawful detentions of opposition party supporters, particularly in the SNNPRS region.

The EPRDF ruling party was dominated by the Tigrayan ethnic group. Of 548 seats in the House of People's Representatives (HPR), 496 were held by the EPRDF or its affiliate parties. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), one affiliate party, occupied 40 seats. The EPRDF, its affiliates, and EPRDF sympathizers controlled all seats in the 108 member House of Federation, whose members were appointed by regional governments and by the federal Government.

Membership in the EPRDF gave advantages to its members, and the party owned many businesses and awarded jobs to loyal supporters. In addition to the Government, only the EPRDF and the TPLF were allowed to operate radio stations (see Section 2.a.).

Opposition parties continued to lack organization or direction. Prime Minister Meles claimed to support "constructive engagement" with the opposition; however, Meles publicly criticized the opposition for its disloyalty and its "politics of hate."

Citizens exercised the right to vote for a national government in 2000 during elections for the HPR, and during local elections held in 2001 in February, March, and December. In the 2000 national elections, 17 opposition political parties contested the election, including the AAPO, the SEPDC, and the Oromo National Congress. The better funded and better organized incumbent party, the EPRDF, generally dominated candidates of the relatively weaker and less organized opposition parties and independent candidates, except in the SNNPRS, where the opposition made significant gains. EPRDF candidates won 481 seats in the HPR, EPRDF affiliate candidates won 37 seats, opposition party candidates won 16 seats, and independent candidates won 13 seats. The Government established a donor supported fund for opposition party candidates, provided opposition candidates access to state-owned electronic media, and changed the law to permit civil servants to run for office without first resigning their positions. The Government was willing to engage opponents in open debate at candidate and party forums. Many of these debates were broadcast live on national radio and television and reported on in both government and private newspapers. Free radio broadcast time was set aside for the elections, and 225 independent candidates and 33 political parties made use of it.

There were credible reports that local officials throughout the country ignored NEB instructions on the acceptance of candidate endorsement signatures from opposition party candidates. There were instances in which the NEB had to force local authorities to accept nominations. There were credible reports that during candidate registration, many kebele (village or municipal unit) offices were closed for holidays or were otherwise unstaffed, hindering the registration process of opposition candidates. In the Somali region prior to the August 2000 elections, thousands of ballots were reprinted to rectify the fact that a female opposition candidate had not been listed despite having met NEB requirements for candidate registration.

There were a number of killings as a result of preelection and postelection violence; numerous persons also were arrested and detained, some because they voted for the opposition (see Section 1.d.). Several SEPDC candidates for the national or municipal elections were detained, and two SEPDC members elected to the regional council in 2000 were detained without having their parliamentary immunity formally removed (see Section 1.d.).

There also were numerous reports from SEPDC that members of the security forces harassed and intimidated persons who supported or voted for the opposition during the 2000 elections. For example, there were credible reports that ruling party personnel withheld fertilizer and food aid in the SNNPRS region and suspended or dismissed SEPDC supporters from their jobs in retaliation for voters electing opposition candidates; they were not allowed to return to their positions by year's end. Some teachers in the Southern Region who served as SEPDC election observers were not able to collect their salaries and were denied entry to summer update courses.

There were credible reports that during the 2000 national elections citizens who tried to register to vote were told by government personnel that they had to prove their citizenship; under the law only citizens can vote. Reportedly Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were not allowed to register or to vote.

There were allegations of irregularities, including incidents of election officials instructing voters for whom to vote, candidates campaigning at polling stations, and candidates being pressured into quitting. There also were credible reports of ballot stuffing, vote count fraud, voter intimidation or bribery, dismissals from work, withholding of

salaries, detentions, abductions, and killings. The NEB, acting on its constitutional authority, investigated complaints of the irregularities and determined that many of them had merit. The NEB ordered new elections in some areas of SNNPRS that were held later in 2000; they were declared generally free and fair by international observers. In 2000 the NEB agreed to bring charges against those suspected of the worst election abuses in the SNNPRS; however, no action had been taken by year's end.

In February, March, and December 2001, local elections at the kebele and woreda (county) levels were conducted in all regions and administrative zones except in the Somali regions. In February 2001, after the EPDRF overwhelmingly won the woreda elections, opposition groups reported intimidation of candidates and voters by the ruling party cadres, including the killing of two supporters (see Section 1.a.); opposition groups also accused the NEB of failing to address these problems during the period prior to the elections. Opposition parties subsequently announced their withdrawal from the February 2001 elections, which was followed by the withdrawal of opposition party members from seats in the Addis Ababa municipal council. In August 2001, the NEB made a statement indicating that the Government was aware of election irregularities and that the harassment of persons in the SNNPRS had impeded the organization of local elections. The NEB also called for the unconditional release of those detained for their affiliation with the SEPDC.

Elections for the Somali region that were scheduled for 2001 were postponed indefinitely. The Government said that necessary preparations for those elections were still not in place. A new date had not been set by year's end.

The December 2001 elections in the Southern Region were affected by the harassment of opposition parties in the region following the 2000 elections. There were few election observers on hand because the elections were scheduled to coincide with Christmas and New Year's weekends; however, in March EHRCO reported that these elections were not free and fair. EHRCO also reported that 449 persons were arrested in connection with the elections. Opposition participation in the elections was hampered by difficulty in registering candidates and limitations on time remaining to campaign. After claiming that election fraud occurred during the zonal and woreda elections, most parties belonging to the SEPDC coalition did not participate in the kebele elections, citing the inability of the NEB to ensure free and fair elections.

There were credible reports from SEPDC representatives that at least 11 of their members were killed in the period leading up to the December 2001 regional elections (see Section 1.a.).

There were credible reports that local authorities in the Oromiya, Amhara, and Southern Region periodically arrested and detained supporters of opposition parties in the period prior to and following the regional elections in those areas.

Local government officials in Konso Special Woreda, in the Southern Region, continued to deny representatives of the opposition Konso People's Democratic Union (KPDU) the right to assume the offices to which they were elected in 2001. After opening a branch office in the town of Fasha on December 29, pro-government supporters severely beat several KPDU members and seriously damaged the newly opened office. According to the KPDU, local government officials also detained Kafta Kayitre and held him incommunicado for leasing office space in Fasha to the KPDU.

On November 20, the home of EDUP official Desalegn Yimer was burned down by an arsonist in Ambasel Woreda, Kebele 2, in the town of Hayk, South Wello Zone, which resulted in extensive property loss. The EDUP blamed government forces for the incident. No government investigation had been initiated by year's end.

In October Prime Minister Meles dissolved the Addis Ababa city government and replaced it with a provisional administration to be led by EPRDF/TPLF member Arkebe Oqubay until elections are held next year.

Political participation remained closed to a number of organizations that have not renounced violence and did not accept the Government as a legitimate authority. These groups included MEDHIN, the Coalition of Ethiopian Democratic Forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, the OLF, some elements of the ONLF, and several smaller Somali groups.

Of the 19 members of the Council of Ministers, 1 was a woman, 2 other women held ministerial positions, and a number of other women held senior positions. There were 42 women among the 548 members of the HPR, and 9 of 113 members in the House of Federation were women. Of the 14 members of the Supreme Court, 3 were women.

The government policy of ethnic federalism led to the creation of individual constituencies to help ensure

representation in the HPR of all major ethnic groups. Small ethnic groups were not represented in the legislature. There were 23 nationality groups in 6 regional states that did not have a sufficient population to qualify for constituency seats; however, individuals from these nationality groups competed for 23 special seats in the 548-seat HPR in the 2000 elections.

Section 4 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups operated with some government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were somewhat cooperative with them; however, the Government often was distrustful and wary of such groups. Some of the most prominent domestic human rights organizations included EHRCO, the Human Rights League (HRL), and the Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA). These and numerous other groups primarily engaged in civic and human rights education, legal assistance, and trial monitoring. However, the Government neither shared information about nor acknowledged the existence of human rights abuses with members of the NGO community.

The HRL, founded by Oromo civic leaders in 1997, continued to be investigated by the Government at year's end for its alleged ties to the OLF. In 2001 the HRL sued the Government, and the court ordered the Ministry of Justice to reply to the HRL petition for registration by February. The lawsuit was pending at year's end (see Section 2.b.).

Unlike in the previous year, the EWLA did not experience harassment from the Government. The EWLA's primary function was to represent women legally, particularly in civil matters involving the new family law, spousal abuse, divorce, child custody, and criminal matters.

Several international human rights groups visited the country during the year. There were no reports that any member of such a group had difficulty obtaining an entry visa. In July a group of researchers from HRW visited to gather information on the violence in Awassa and Tepi. In August the CPJ visited to meet with members of the independent press and to criticize government intimidation of journalists. Education International was able to visit without restriction during the year. Prison Fellowship International has developed a good relationship with prison officials throughout the country. In September Transparency International sent a team to Addis Ababa to explore conditions for establishing a local chapter.

During the year, the ICRC was allowed to visit most federal and regional prisons, civilian detention facilities, and police stations throughout the country, including the facilities where persons still were in detention at year's end in connection with the student riots in April 2001. The ICRC was granted access to the Tatek military detention facilities but not to other military detention facilities where suspected OLF fighters had been held (see Section 1.d.). The ICRC generally was given access to detention facilities holding Eritrean POWs, including the main camp at Dedesa (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). In 2000 the Government and Eritrea agreed that the ICRC would be the supervisory organization for the exchange of expellees or deportees and would facilitate all POW exchanges.

Officials of the Federal Security Authority generally were responsive to requests for information from the diplomatic community.

The Government is required under the Constitution to establish a Human Rights Commission and Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman was expected to have the authority to receive and investigate complaints with respect to misadministration by executive branch offices. In 2000 Parliament completed legislative action to create both entities, and in July 2001 the parliamentary committee was selected to appoint members to the Ombudsman office; however, neither entity was operational by year's end.

Section 5 Discrimination Based on Race, Sex, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The Constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, national origin, political or other opinion, or social status; however, the Government in practice did not effectively enforce these protections.

Women

Domestic violence, including wife beating and marital rape, was a pervasive social problem. While women had recourse to the police and the courts, societal norms and limited infrastructure prevented many women from seeking legal redress, especially in rural areas. Social practices obstructed investigations and prosecutions in rape cases, and many women were not aware of their rights under the law. It was estimated that there were more than 1,000 rapes a year in Addis Ababa alone. Federal police reported 393 cases of rape committed during the year;

however, it was estimated that there were more than 1,000 rapes a year in Addis Ababa. The number of reports by rape victims to police and the amount of press reporting of rape cases increased. In cases of marriage by abduction, the perpetrator was not punished if the victim agreed to marry him (unless the marriage was annulled); even after a perpetrator was convicted, the sentence was commuted if the victim married him. Rape sentences increased in practice from 10 to 13 years, in line with the 10 to 15 years prescribed by law; however, rapists generally remained in prison for a period of between 7 and 10 years. There were credible reports that members of the military who were redeployed from border areas to other regions sexually harassed and raped some young women. During the year, the EWLA conducted research on the number of rapes committed and the number of rape convictions handed down; however, they had not released their results by year's end.

Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage still was practiced widely in the Oromiya region and the SNNPRS, despite the Government's attempts to combat this practice. Forced sexual relationships often accompanied most marriages by abduction, and women often were abused physically during the abduction. Many of those girls married as early as the age of 7, despite the legal marriage age of 18. Abductions led to conflicts among families, communities, and ethnic groups.

The majority of girls underwent some form of FGM. The NCTPE conducted a survey that was published in 1998, which indicated that 72.7 percent of the female population had undergone FGM, down from an estimated 90 percent of the female population in 1990. Clitoridectomies typically were performed 7 days after birth and consisted of an excision of the labia. Infibulation, the most extreme and dangerous form of FGM, was performed at any time between the age of 8 and the onset of puberty.

The Constitution prohibits traditional harmful practices that result in bodily or mental harm. The 1957 Penal Code provides that anyone who caused bodily injury to another and impaired the victim's health would be subject to punishment. However, these provisions did not specifically outlaw FGM. The Government was updating the Penal Code and in the draft version of the legislation, FGM was banned. The Government also worked to discourage the practice of FGM through education in public schools.

Thousands of women traveled to the Middle East as industrial and domestic workers. There were credible reports from the EWLA that some female workers were abused in these positions (see Section 6.f.).

The Constitution states that all persons are equal before the law; however, the Government has not yet fully put into place mechanisms for the effective enforcement of these protections. The Family Law sets the legal marriage age for girls at 18, the same as for boys; elevates civil law above customary and religious law; allows for the legal sharing of property for unmarried couples who live together for at least 5 years; eliminates family arbitrators as a means of settling marital disputes in lieu of the court system; allows for the joint administration of common marital property; requires the courts to take into account the situation of children or the weakest member of the family in the event of divorce or separation; and imposes a 6-month waiting period on women seeking to remarry following divorce or the death of a spouse.

Discrimination against women was most acute in rural areas, where 85 percent of the population lived. The Civil Code and the Penal Code, both of which were under review by the Ministry of Justice, contained discriminatory regulations, such as the recognition of the husband as the legal head of the family and the sole guardian of children over 5 years old. Domestic violence was not considered a serious justification to obtain a divorce. There was only limited juridical recognition of common law marriage. Irrespective of the number of years the marriage existed, the number of children raised, and joint property, the woman was entitled to only 3 months' financial support should the relationship end. A husband had no obligation to provide financial assistance to his family and, as a result, women and children sometimes were abandoned when there was a problem in the marriage.

All land belonged to the Government; however, women could obtain government leases to land, and the Government had an explicit policy to provide equal access to land for women. However, this policy rarely was enforced in rural communities. In urban areas, women had fewer employment opportunities than did men, and the jobs available did not provide equal pay for equal work.

The Government endorsed a National Policy on Women to enhance the status of women that sought to expand educational and work opportunities, improve access to health care, and educate women regarding unhealthy traditional practices such as early marriage. A National Plan of Action, aimed at addressing various gender constraints to development had been drafted under the leadership of the Women's Affairs Office within the Prime Minister's Office. There were few improvements in the status of women since the inception of the program. According to a study by the National Committee on Traditional Practices of Ethiopia in 1998, certain harmful practices such as early marriage and marriage by abduction appeared to be declining. Neither the HRC nor the

Office of the Ombudsman was operational by year's end. Once operational, both organizations were expected to have a representative responsible for women's rights (see Section 4).

Children

The Government supported efforts by domestic and international NGOs that focused on children's social, health, and legal issues. For example, local officials provided transportation and free facilities to NGO activities. Neither the HRC nor the Office of the Ombudsman was operational by year's end; however, once operational, both organizations are expected to have a representative responsible for the rights of children. However, the Government had limited their ability to provide improved health care and basic education.

By law primary education was compulsory, free, and universal; however, despite efforts by the Government to increase the number of schools, there were not enough schools to accommodate the country's youth. The Government used a three-shift system in all primary and secondary schools to maximize the utilization of classrooms and to provide an opportunity for working children to attend school. During the year, approximately 40 percent of primary and 67 percent of secondary schools operated in two shifts to maximize the utilization of classrooms. Most urban schools operated evening classes to provide an opportunity for working children to attend classes. Nationwide the total enrollment of school-age children was 61.6 percent. Only 71.7 percent of male primary school-age children and 51.2 percent of female primary school-age children attended school. Girls attended school in lower numbers than boys, except in Addis Ababa, where girls' attendance was slightly higher at 52.7 percent. Government reports showed that 31 percent of the children who attended school left the system before they reached the second grade. Only 28 percent of children who began first grade completed eighth grade. The literacy rate was approximately 20 to 30 percent, and only 17 percent of women were literate compared with 26 percent of men; however, it was difficult to estimate literacy rates accurately due to a lack of government statistics. Only 20.4 percent of boys and 13.7 percent of girls attended general secondary school (grades 9-10). During the year, the government widened the implementation of its education policy that compressed 12 years into 10 years of general education for students not planning to attend college. Students planning to attend university continued to study for 2 additional years in what was a pre-university program (grades 11-12). Students in grade 12 continued to take the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Exam (ESLCE). Students in grade 10 also were required to take the ESLCE. There was space in institutions of higher learning for only a small percentage of graduates.

In Addis Ababa's police stations, there were 10 Child Protection Units that were staffed by members of an NGO and protected the rights of juvenile delinquents and victims of crime. Some police officers completed training on procedures for handling cases of child abuse and juvenile delinquency; however, there was a clear need for reform of the juvenile justice system. Three federal judges sat on one bench to hear all cases of juvenile offenses. There was a large backlog of juvenile cases and accused children often remained in detention with adults until their cases were heard. There was only 1 juvenile remand home with a capacity of 150 for children under age 15, and the juveniles who could not be accommodated at the juvenile remand home were incarcerated with adults.

Societal abuse of young girls continued to be a problem. FGM was performed on the majority of girls (see Section 5, Women).

Other harmful traditional practices surveyed by the NCTPE included uvulectomy, milk-teeth extraction, early marriage, marriage by abduction, and food and work prohibitions (see Section 6.f.). The Family Code defines the age of sexual consent as 18 for both females and males; however, early childhood marriage was common in rural areas where girls as young as age 7 were subjected to arranged marriages. In the Afar region of the east, young girls continued to be married to much older men, but this traditional practice came under greater scrutiny and criticism during the year. The Tigray Women's Association also impacted societal attitudes toward early marriage. Pregnancy at an early age often led to obstetric fistulae and permanent incontinence. Treatment was available at only 1 hospital in Addis Ababa that performed more than 1,000 fistula operations a year. It estimated that for every successful operation performed, 10 other young women needed the treatment. The maternal mortality rate was extremely high partly due to food taboos for pregnant women, poverty, early marriage, and birth complications related to FGM, especially infibulation.

There were approximately 50,000 to 60,000 street children in Addis Ababa; however, the figures were difficult to estimate, and observers believed the problem was growing. These children begged, sometimes as part of a gang, or worked in the informal sector (see Section 6.d.). Government and privately run orphanages were unable to handle the number of street children, and older children often abused younger children. Due to severe resource constraints, abandoned infants often were overlooked or neglected at hospitals and orphanages. Children sometimes were maimed or blinded by their "handlers" to raise their earnings from begging. EHRCO reported that during the year, security forces relocated approximately 200 homeless persons, many of them children, to areas

outside Addis Ababa (see Section 1.f.).

Child prostitution continued to be a problem and was perceived widely to be growing (see Section 6.f.).

Children reportedly were trafficked out of the country in adoption schemes (see Section 6.f.).

The Ministry of Defense did not permit persons under the age of 18 to join the armed forces, and the Government made efforts to enforce this policy. There were no reports that children under the age of 18 were recruited into the military during the year; however, in the past, military officers admitted that underage applicants sometimes were enlisted. Scarce birth certificates, poor educational opportunities, patriotism, and pervasive poverty encouraged underage applicants to try to circumvent restrictions on underage soldiers. If a unit commander suspected but could not prove that a soldier was underage, he could transfer the soldier from a front-line combat unit to a rear-area command. There were no reports of children joining local militias during the year.

Persons with Disabilities

The law mandates equal rights for persons with disabilities; however, the Government had no established mechanisms to enforce these rights. Persons with minor disabilities sometimes complained of job discrimination. The Government did not mandate access to buildings or require government services for persons with disabilities. The Constitution provides rehabilitation and assistance to persons with physical and mental disabilities; however, the Government devoted few resources for these purposes.

There were approximately six million persons with disabilities in the country. The conflict with Eritrea resulted in numerous soldiers losing limbs, many from landmine explosions. Wheelchairs were rare in the country. Although there were approximately 800,000 mentally ill persons, there was only 1 mental hospital and only 10 psychiatrists in the country.

There were approximately 70 NGOs that worked with persons with disabilities. For example, the Amhara Development Association provided vocational training to war veterans with disabilities in Bahir Dar. The Tigray Development Association operated a center in Mekele that provided prostheses and seed money for business development, training, and counseling for persons with disabilities. The international NGO Landmine Survivors provided a number of services to victims of landmine explosions including counseling and referrals to rehabilitation services.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

There were more than 80 ethnic groups. Although many of these groups influenced the political and cultural life of the country, Amharas and Tigrayans from the northern highlands played a dominant role. The largest single group was the Oromos, who accounted for 40 percent of the population. There were credible reports that teachers and other government workers had their employment terminated if they were not of the dominant ethnic group in the region.

In an attempt to address ethnic concerns, the Government established a federal system with political boundaries drawn roughly along major ethnic lines. With federalism, regional states had much greater control over their affairs. Political parties were primarily ethnically based.

Ethnic clashes during the year resulted in a number of deaths, injuries, and the displacement of thousands of persons (see Section 2.d.). For example, in January 92 ethnic Somalis were killed during regional clashes over grazing and water rights. Banditry and lawlessness continued to prevail in the region at year's end.

In March between 600 and 800 persons were killed during clashes between the Sheko-Mejjanger and Manja and the Sheka and Bench-Majjii in and around the town of Tepi, capital of the Yeki District, in the Southern Region. Government officials reported 128 deaths; however, the SEPDC reported more than 1,700 deaths. More than 2,000 homes were destroyed and 5,800 persons were displaced as a result of the violence. The clashes involved local officials and members of each of these communities, and resulted from the dissatisfaction of many Sheko-Mejjanger who had wanted autonomy following an unsuccessful attempt in 1993 to move the Shekicho zone from the Southern Region to the Gambella Region. The Government claimed to have arrested 41 policemen, 39 militia members, and 11 administrative officials for their involvement in the clashes. However, the Government refused to allow an independent investigation of the incident and put the Federal Police in charge of the government's internal investigation.

In April several persons were killed and numerous houses were burned during fighting over a land dispute between the Deresha and the Zaise. Local ruling party officials had incited the violence between the previously peaceful groups.

On October 15, 8 Amhara men shot and killed at least 31 Afar women in a village marketplace in North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region. Police detained seven of the eight suspected killers for questioning. The Chairman of the Kure Beret Farmers Association, who also was detained for questioning in relation to this case, was killed while in prison. There was no indication that the Government had opened an investigation into his death by year's end.

During the year, there were numerous clashes between the Anuak and Nuer clans. For example, on July 7, 60 persons were killed and 41 were injured during ethnic conflict between Nuer and Anuak tribesmen in the Gambella region over political power sharing. EHRCO reported that all houses in eight kebeles were burned to the ground, and 8,760 persons were displaced from their homes. The situation remained unstable at year's end. There were no reports that the Government investigated the conflict.

On September 25, a grenade was thrown into a student dormitory at the Gambella Teachers College. One person died and five were injured in the attack. The students were all members of the Nuer clan.

On October 7, four persons were injured when someone exploded a grenade in the center of Gambella town. The apparent target of the attack was the truck driver transporting ethnic Nuer to the area.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports of killings during ethnic clashes between the Oromo Borena and the ethnic-Somali Garre pastoralists, or between drought victims from Amhara and the Oromos in the Gida Kiremv district.

The military remained an ethnically diverse organization; however, diversity was less common in the higher ranks among officer personnel. There were reports that soldiers redeployed from the war front to other regions abused civilians, particularly in the Amhara, Oromia, and SNNPRS regions. There were reports that soldiers targeted Oromos for abuse during the year.

There were occasional reports of discrimination and exclusion of Eritreans, particularly by kebele level officials. Reports indicated that kebele officials sometimes denied indigent Eritreans access to free medical supplies.

Section 6 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The Constitution provides most workers with the right to form and join unions; however, the law specifically excludes teachers and civil servants, including judges, prosecutors, security services, air transport and railway services, urban and inter-urban bus services, filling stations, banks and postal service workers from organizing unions. Employer interference was not a major problem; however, there was government interference. Many trade union leaders have been removed from their elected office or forced to leave the country. According to the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), trade union leaders still were being sent to prison for forming unions or seeking redress or their grievances. Many of the trade union leader arrests took place in Oromiya region. The minimum number of workers required to form a union was 20. All unions had to be registered; however, the Government still retained the authority to cancel union registration. The law stipulates that a trade organization may not act in an overtly political manner.

Approximately 300,000 workers were unionized. The Ethiopian Teachers' Association (ETA) has been a particular target for government harassment. The ETA formerly had a membership of 120,000; however, that number has decreased significantly due to government intimidation and restrictions on ETA activities. During the year, the ETA estimated its membership at 110,000. The Government, in an attempt to influence ETA leadership, created a "new" ETA that drew its funding from mandatory contributions from teachers. Teachers were coerced to make payments of \$0.23 (2 birr) a month to the "new" ETA, which counted them as its members. The International Labor Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts cited the Government's interference with the operation of the original ETA and the government-inspired formation of the "New ETA" as an abrogation of the basic right of association.

The ETA claimed that 205 unionized teachers had been dismissed, detained, or transferred to remote areas since April 2001. In May the Government, after significant international pressure, released Dr. Taye Woldeesemayat, president of the ETA, from prison after he had served 6 years of a 15-year sentence for inciting violence (see Section 1.d.). Security forces continued to harass members of the ETA. Police again arrested then-Acting

Secretary-General of the ETA Abate Angori in December for having written a press release that the Government deemed inflammatory in the wake of the April 2001 riots at Addis Ababa University. Officials at Maekelawi Criminal Investigation Bureau have summoned him on several occasions. He last was summoned to court on November 18, but the judges were not available. While awaiting notification of his next hearing, the police arrested him and held him incommunicado for more than a week.

Police also harassed the Addis Ababa Teachers Association, a subgroup of the ETA, during the year by dispersing its meetings. The ETA was denied access to a meeting hall in Sidama Zone even though a government official took its money for the hall rental. Several teachers were detained for participating in an ETA conference in Awassa during the year (see Sections 1.d. and 2.b.).

Seasonal and part-time agricultural workers were not organized even on state-owned plantations. Seasonal workers' compensation, benefits, and working conditions were far below those of unionized permanent plantation employees.

There was no requirement that unions belong to the CETU, which included all nine federations organized by industrial and service sectors rather than by region. Recently publicized allegations of widespread corruption within CETU's leadership ranks and of CETU's close ties to the Government have paralyzed the organization. A special meeting of CETU's General Congress was scheduled for January 2003 to try to resolve the impasse.

The law prohibits antiunion discrimination by employers against union members and organizers; however, unions reported that union activists frequently were fired. Unlawful dismissal suits often took years to resolve because of case backlogs in the labor courts. There were grievance procedures for hearings on allegations of discrimination brought by individuals or unions. Employers found guilty of antiunion discrimination were required to reinstate workers fired for union activities. However, according to labor leaders, a number of court cases in which workers were terminated for union activities still were pending after 4 or 5 years.

No further information was available by year's end on the 2000 case in which 586 workers, including union leaders, were expelled from a private company following the dissolution of its labor union.

Independent unions and those belonging to CETU were free to affiliate with and participate in international labor bodies. There were no restrictions on individual trade unions applying for membership in the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU). Some unions affiliated with international organizations; however, no Ethiopian trade unions were members of the ICTU. CETU applied for membership in the ICTU, but a response from the ICTU was pending at year's end. In 2000 the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association issued a strong criticism of the Government for its restrictions on freedom of association.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The Constitution protects the right of collective bargaining for most workers, and in practice the Government allowed citizens to exercise this right freely. Labor experts estimated that more than 90 percent of unionized workers were covered by collective bargaining agreements. Wages were negotiated at the plant level. Some efforts to enforce labor regulations were made within the formal industrial sector.

The 1993 Government Labor Proclamation 42 explicitly gives workers the right to strike to protect their interests; however, it also sets out the need for aggrieved workers first to make efforts at conciliation before striking. These applied equally to an employer's right to lock out workers. Strikes must be supported by a majority of the workers affected. If workers brought their dispute to the attention of the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry would appoint a conciliator to bring about a settlement. If the conciliator failed to settle a labor dispute within 30 days, he was obliged to prepare a report for the Ministry. Either party could submit the matter to a Labor Relations Board (LRB) or submit to independent arbitration. The Government established LRBs at the national level and in some regions. The Minister of Labor and Social Affairs appointed each LRB chairman, and the four board members included two each from trade unions and employer groups. However, workers still retained the right to strike without resorting to either of these options, provided they had given at least 10 days notice to the other party and to the Ministry, made efforts at reconciliation, and provided at least a 30-day warning in cases already before a court or LRB. The proclamation also forbids strikes by air transport and railway service workers, electric power suppliers, bus operators, gas station personnel, hospital and pharmacy personnel, bank employees, firemen, postal and telecommunications personnel, and urban sanitary workers.

In April truckers who demanded more security on the road through Afar went on strike for 2 days. The strike followed the killing and mutilation of a trucker by Afar bandits. The Government and CETU considered strikes such

as the truckers strike in Afar State and less publicized strikes by road construction crews throughout the country illegal because workers did not follow the procedures set forth by Labor Proclamation 42.

The law prohibits retribution against strikers, but labor leaders said that most workers were not convinced that the Government would enforce this protection. Labor officials said that due to high unemployment and long delays in the hearing of labor cases, some workers were afraid to participate in strikes or other labor actions.

The law also prohibits workers who provide essential services from striking.

There were no export processing zones (EPZs).

c. Prohibition of Forced or Bonded Labor

The law prohibits forced or bonded labor, including by children; however, there were reports it occurred. Forced labor could be used by court order as a punitive measure. For example, there were credible reports that persons detained after the April 2001 riots in Addis Ababa were subjected to forced labor at Sendafa police facility, Showa Robit prison, and the Zeway prison (see Section 1.c.). The Constitution prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude, and there were no reports of slavery within the country.

Young girls reportedly were forced into prostitution by family members (see Sections 5 and 6.f.). There were several anecdotal accounts from the EWLA of young persons, especially girls, traveling to the Middle East to work as domestic laborers, some of whom were beaten and sexually abused (see Section 6.f.).

d. Status of Child Labor Practices and Minimum Age for Employment

Child labor remained a serious problem. Under the law, the minimum age for wage or salary employment is 14 years; special provisions cover children between the ages of 14 and 18, including the prohibition of hazardous or night work. The Government defined hazardous work as work in factories or involving machinery with moving parts, or any work that could jeopardize children's health.

Children between the ages of 14 and 18 years were not permitted to work more than 7 hours per day, work between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., work on public holidays or rest days, or perform overtime work. While the Government made some effort to enforce these regulations within the formal industrial sector, social welfare activists, civic organizers, government officials, and employers agreed that child labor was pervasive throughout the country, especially in the informal sector. In urban areas, numerous children worked in a variety of jobs, including shining shoes, hustling passengers into cabs, working as porters, selling lottery tickets, and herding animals. Child labor remained a serious problem in rural areas, where it occurred primarily on plantations and was aggravated by a family tenancy (sharecropping) system, and child domestic laborers were common.

Child laborers often were abused. An 1999 ILO-funded research survey reported that the prevalence of child abuse among urban child laborers was 70 percent, compared with 24.5 percent among non-economically active children from the same urban district. The study concluded that physical and emotional abuse were twice as common among child workers compared with non-workers, sexual abuse was five times as common, and neglect was eight times as common. Among child workers surveyed, rapes occurred exclusively among child domestic laborers. The findings of a new ILO-funded survey on child labor abuse will not be available before February 2003.

A second 1999 research study of child labor sponsored by the CETU's National Federation of Farm, Plantation, Fishery, and Agro-industry Trade Unions focused on rural locations. The study reported that 30 percent of the workers on state farms surveyed were between the ages of 7 and 14. Child workers, who worked alongside parents hired by the state, typically worked 6 days a week, received no benefits, and earned less than \$10 (80 birr) a month. At 1 plantation, 75 percent of the children worked 12-hour days. There were no new reports regarding child labor abuse on plantations. There also was evidence that children as young as 14 years old were permitted to join local militias with the consent of village leaders. This reportedly was part of an effort to keep children in local areas despite limited educational or employment opportunities (see Section 5). The Government maintained that most economically active children were engaged in family-based, non-exploitative child work that was part of the socialization process and that there was not a child labor problem.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs was designated to enforce child labor laws. The Government's definition of worst forms of child labor included prostitution and bonded labor; however, the Government was not a signatory to ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

The law prohibits forced and bonded labor by children; however, there were reports that it occurs (see Sections 6.c. and 6.f.).

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The law mandates a minimum wage of approximately \$15 (120 birr) per month for all wage earners in both the private and public sectors; in addition each industry and service sector established its own minimum wage. For example, public sector employees, the largest group of wage earners, earned a minimum wage of approximately \$22 (175 birr) per month; employees in the banking and insurance sector had a minimum wage of \$25 (200 birr) per month. According to the Office of the Study of Wages and Other Remuneration, these wages were insufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. Consequently most families needed to have at least two wage earners to survive, which forced many children to leave school early. In addition, only a small percentage of the population was involved in wage labor employment, which was concentrated largely in urban areas.

The Labor Law stipulates a 48-hour legal workweek, consisting of 6 days of 8 hours each, with a 24-hour rest period. However, it was not enforced effectively, and in practice, most employees worked a 40-hour workweek consisting of 5 8-hour days.

The Government, industry, and unions negotiated to set occupational health and safety standards; however, the inspection department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs enforced these standards ineffectively, due to a lack of human and financial resources. Enforcement also was inhibited by a lack of detailed, sector-specific health and safety guidelines. Workers had the right to remove themselves from dangerous situations without jeopardizing their employment; however, most workers feared losing their jobs if they were to do so.

The law also protects foreign workers.

f. Trafficking in Persons

The law and the Constitution prohibit trafficking in persons; however, there were numerous reports that persons were trafficked to, from, and within the country. Child prostitution was a problem, especially in urban areas. The criminal code applied only to women and children trafficked for the purposes of prostitution; such trafficking was punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment and a fine of \$1166 (10,000 birr). Various laws prohibit trafficking and provide for fines and prison sentences of up to 20 years. During the year, 80 to 100 persons were charged with trafficking; however, there were no reported prosecutions or investigations during the year, due in part to limited resources.

There were unconfirmed reports that children from the southern part of the country were transported into Kenya by child traffickers operating adoption rings, and adopted as other nationalities. The Government closed down adoption agencies operating in the country that failed to observe proper rules and regulations.

The National Steering Committee Against Sexual Exploitation of Children was chaired by the Children, Youth, and Family Affairs Department of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. NGOs reported that girls as young as age 11 were recruited to work in houses of prostitution where they were kept uninformed of the risks of HIV/AIDS infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. There were many press reports of the large-scale employment of children, especially underage girls, as hotel workers, barmaids, and prostitutes in resort towns and rural truck stops. There were no reported cases that poor rural families sold their young teenage daughters to hotel and bar owners on the main truck routes; however, the practice was believed to exist. Social workers noted that young girls were prized because their clients believed that they were free of sexually transmitted diseases. The unwanted infants of these young girls usually were abandoned at hospitals, police stations, welfare clinics, and adoption agencies. Pervasive poverty, migration to urban centers, early marriage, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and limited educational and job opportunities aggravated the problem of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. There were several NGOs that aided child victims, including the Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia, which provided shelter and protection for children forced into prostitution or commercial sexual exploitation.

There was evidence that children were trafficked from rural areas to Addis Ababa, lured by false promises of employment. Although illegal, the abduction of women and girls as a form of marriage still was practiced widely in Oromiya regions and the SNNPRS (see Section 5).

Private entities arranged for overseas work and, as a result, the number of women sent to Middle Eastern countries, particularly Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, as domestic or industrial workers increased significantly during the year. These Ethiopian women typically were trafficked through Djibouti,

Yemen, and Syria. In 2001 there were reports that Syrian border police shot three women, killing one and injuring two, as they attempted to cross the border from Lebanon. The Chief of the Investigation and Detention Center in Lebanon reported that 20,000 to 25,000 Ethiopian women worked in Beirut, a majority of whom were trafficked. Approximately 50 percent of these women were not able to return legally to their home country.

There reportedly was a network of persons based in the tourism and trade sectors who were involved heavily in soliciting potential clients, recruiting young girls, arranging travel, and fabricating counterfeit work permits, travel documents, and birth certificates. There were reports from the EWLA that some domestic workers abroad were subjected to abusive conditions, including sexual exploitation. In addition, the employers of domestic laborers sometimes seized passports, failed to pay salaries, and overworked their employees. Some domestics were forced to work for their employers' relatives without additional pay. Domestics were forced to pay a monetary penalty for leaving their employment early. Reports of abuse decreased after the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs began reviewing the contracts of prospective domestic workers and denying exit visas if the contracts did not appear satisfactory.

Training programs were implemented for police officers on the criminal aspects of trafficking. These institutions have limited resources and jurisdiction to protect or intervene in cases of prosecution of offending employers.

There were some government initiatives during the year to combat trafficking, including government consultation with IOM to try to resolve the problem. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs had limited success in regulating employment agencies that sent migrant workers to Middle Eastern countries. Many illegal employment agencies escaped government scrutiny and continued to operate freely. There was a consulate in Beirut to assist women who were trafficked to Lebanon. The federal police's Women's Affairs Bureau, in collaboration with the media, created a public awareness program on the dangers of migrating to Middle Eastern countries.